



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1224 Vienna, 4 April 2019

#### **EU Statement on the First Round of the Presidential Election in Ukraine**

The first round of the Presidential election was held in Ukraine on 31 March.

The European Union welcomes that, according to the International Election Observation Mission, the election was competitive, voters had a broad choice and turned out in high numbers. Fundamental freedoms were generally respected. All shortcomings noted by ODIHR including misuse of state resources and vote-buying need to be addressed. While the media landscape is diverse, the campaign coverage was often biased. Yet the electionday, which was peaceful, was assessed positively overall and paves the way to the second round. Voting was well-organised, smooth, transparent and efficient, and procedures were generally adhered to.

The European Union looks forward to a free, fair and transparent second round of the elections on 21 April, held in accordance with international standards. It is important that all parties adhere to democratic principles, respecting the will of Ukrainian people and avoid provoking unnecessary tensions.

We regret that the voting could not be organized in certain parts of Ukraine as a consequence of the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation and the ongoing armed conflict and other hostilities in the East of the country. We remain unwavering in our support to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. We

continue to support Ukraine's commitment to ensuring a stable, prosperous and democratic future for all its citizens, with the Association Agreement providing an overarching framework for our close cooperation.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.